

Newsletter Highlights

Recognizing Excellence: DURP Students Receive APA Florida Award

A team of DURP students won the APA Florida Award of Excellence in the Outstanding Student Project category at the Florida Planning Conference in Jacksonville for their project, North Star Legacy Communities: Gadsden County Community Heritage Project. Dennis J. Smith, planner-in-residence with DURP, said Florida is home to one of the country's largest populations of APA members.

"Florida hosts five nationally accredited graduate schools of planning. To rise to the top amongst such a tight field, with the evaluations done by some of our nation's most premier planners, is a testament to the dedication and commitment to excellence displayed by this team of students."

The APA Florida Project Awards program aims to provide members with opportunities each year to recognize outstanding Florida-based planning projects in several different categories. Under the guidance of Smith and DURP Senior Planner Billie Ventimiglia, FSU's team focused on legacy communities in Florida. Legacy communities were founded by enslaved Black men and women shortly after emancipation in 1865. The legitimacy of many of these communities has typically been either ignored or forgotten altogether. In fall 2022, students began identifying legacy communities in Gadsden County in FSU's Mark & Marianne Barnebey Planning and Development Lab. The goal of the project was to document these communities, the stories of their residents and important institutions. Students traveled through Gadsden County collecting data and interviews with residents and community leaders. They then compiled a booklet of information about the 25 legacy communities they identified in Gadsden County. Students also created an e-chamber of commerce where business owners could list their businesses for the community to easily find. The hope is the tool can help unlock the economic potential of these communities.

The award was presented at the Florida Planning Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, on Sept. 6.

The Rankings are in: DURP is Climbing to the Top!

In the recently released Planetizen national rankings, DURP climbed to the #11 planning program among public universities (#18 among public and private combined). Furthermore, we are ranked the highest among the state of Florida's five planning programs; #3 among small programs (<55 entering students); #4 among medium city programs (outside top 50 cities by population); #5 in the South region; and #8 among the most "selective" programs (3-year average).



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DURP Welcomes New Faculty Member



We were pleased to welcome Dr. McSorley to FSU DURP in August. All of Dr. McSorley's research addresses a central question: How can planners and communities work together towards healthy, equitable, and thriving communities for everyone? Her research spans theory, practice, and pedagogy to explore how planners can support equitable local decision-making processes by cultivating a reflective practice and intentional, strategic action. Dr. McSorley conducts mixed methods experimental research in the classroom to develop educational strategies to enhance planners' emotional intelligence, among other qualities and capacities. As a member of the American Public Health Association in addition to APA/ACSP, she works on community-based projects that explore healthy community development topics, such as urban agriculture and climate change impacts at the neighborhood scale. Additionally, Dr. McSorley was named one of three institute-wide outstanding graduate student instructors at Georgia Tech during AY 22-23 and was also nominated for a students' choice Teacher of the Year Award in the College of Design while also participating in the Byron Fellowship in August. Ultimately, her work supports planners and communities as they collaboratively imagine their thriving futures and identify steps we can take right now to move towards those futures.

Empowering Emergency Management

Faculty and graduate students from DURP and FSU - Geography offered insights into critical emergency management-related research at the Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference. A highlight of the experience was having current students meet DURPies like John Wilson, former Lee County Public Safety/Emergency Management Director, and Eve Rainey, Executive Director of the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association, alumni from the 1970s and 1980s that played such a decisive role in shaping emergency management planning in Florida.



DURP Planner-in-Residence Dennis J. Smith, AICP and Ph.D. student Karina Amalbert, along with FSU's Geography Department Chair, Mark Wesley Horner, Ph.D. and Masters student M. Shaharier Alam, gave a presentation on Aligning Planning Processes to Make Risk Mitigation & Preparedness Initiatives More Efficient, Effective and Equitable to a full house at the 32nd annual Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference.

Staff Contact Information



Jennifer Barron

Administrative Specialist

Phone: 850-644-8518

Email: jab23w@fsu.edu



Susan Taylor

Academic Program Specialist

Phone: 850-644-4511

Email: sataylor2@fsu.edu



Chrissy Abate

Administrative Assistant

Phone: 850-644-4510

Email: cabate@fsu.edu

Student Activities Beyond the Classroom



Talethia Edwards recently was invited to speak at the Peace Lecture Conference in Cape Town, South Africa. While there, she had the opportunity to share the stage with Nobel Peace Laureate Tawakkol Karman where they discussed community building and peace as form of resistance and liberation for over burden communities. Edwards also had the opportunity to facilitate a discussion on the Power of Your Voice with a group of students aged 14-26. She participated in a "Peace Walk" in an underserved community where they painted a mural and planted fruit trees and vegetation in the garden that is kept by a community mother that feeds her neighbors. She was able to visit the townships and providence, plus shop and eat where the locals ate. About the trip, Edwards said, "it was an amazing experience all around."

Students from **Dennis Smith's** summer studio class held workshops in Perry (Taylor County) and Lake City (Columbia County) to understand local opportunities and challenges related to transportation. Their work is part of a two-semester long initiative to better identify rural transportation infrastructure needs and projects.



FSU DURP and Social Work students in the Community Participation class joined South City neighborhood leader, Ms. Marie Bryant, at a pop-up food giveaway event to survey residents about food access needs in the community.

Beyond the Classroom (cont.)



This spring, DURP students taking **Dr. Kim's** Public/Private Development class got to visit Lake Nona, an exemplary master planned community in Orlando. The students reported that this trip has been one of the most eye-opening experiences during their time at DURP!

Dr. Tisha Holmes's Coastal Planning class and the FSU-FAMU Gulf Scholars visited St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge. They were hosted by Lori Nicholson, Education Coordinator for the Refuge, and learned about the various inland, coastal and intercoastal habitat management strategies, historic preservation of the Lighthouse and opportunities for the community to engage with the Refuge to promote sustainable conservation and tourism.



Dr. Holmes's Coastal Planning class also visited the FSU Coastal & Marine Lab in St. Teresa. They saw structural and nature based coastal erosion mitigation measures, toured the lab, boated in the Bay, met with research faculty and learned about the Apalachicola Bay System Initiative which studies the root causes of decline of the Bay's ecosystem and the deterioration of oyster reefs in order to develop an evidence based and community informed management and restoration plan.

Faculty Spotlight

Earlier this year, DURP faculty member **Minjee Kim** participated in an international gathering hosted by the OECD and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Paris as the expert on US land-based financing policies. Raising DURP's global presence!



Minjee also proudly delivered a guest lecture and a research seminar at the University of Melbourne in Australia this past May. Dr. Kim's expertise on the practice of upzoning and land value capture in the U.S. is taking her places!

Message From the Chair

It is with great enthusiasm for the future of DURP that I write this message to our alumni and friends as DURP's new department Chair. After nine years of tireless service as Chair, Dr. Jeffrey Brown is now the Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives for the college. The department is in excellent shape thanks to Jeff's leadership.

It is hard to believe, but I have been a proud member of the DURP faculty for 17 years. I have witnessed many transitions over that time, but what has never wavered is the faculty's dedication to providing an exemplary education and pushing boundaries with innovative research.

This is a new era for DURP. Many who graduated seven or more years ago might not recognize all the new faculty faces. With the new faces have come strategic updates to our curriculum and research including a concerted effort to address diversity and inclusion throughout. This is in accordance with Planning Accreditation Board standards and our own values as planners.

As is clear from the content in this newsletter, DURP continues to be actively engaged in communities throughout Florida and abroad, and the quality of our work is reflected in our outstanding national reputation and award-winning students and planning projects. The Planning Accreditation Board also recently completed a regular review of our program, and we received exemplary marks on all fronts.

It is clear that DURP is continuing its tradition of excellence, but our department still depends greatly on the support of alumni and friends to keep this tradition alive. There are more planning programs in Florida competing for top students, and your support aids DURP greatly in allowing us to attract talent. I thank you ahead of time for your continued support. It is absolutely critical to our mission.

Thank you for all you do.

- Chris Coutts
Professor and Chairperson

Student Awards



Congratulations to **John Flores** who won the 2023 APA Outstanding Student Award. This award is made in recognition of excellent performance in classroom responsibilities and professional activities both during degree studies and out of class.

Congratulations to the 2023 recipients of the FSU DURP Edward McClure Award for Academic Achievement: **John Flores, Antemil Jorkey, Emma Knight, David Lafontant, Matthew Masa, Cassidy Taylor, and Lauren Thornberg**. The students were recognized at DURP's graduation ceremony in spring.

Congratulations to this year's recipient of the Departmental Service Award, **Mike Zang**, for his stellar service to the students and the department. He was recognized at DURP's graduation in spring.

Congratulations to the recipient of this year's Community Service Award, **Lauren Thornberg**. This award is in recognition of the student's outstanding contributions to the department and community.



Congratulations to the recipient of the Chris Kochtitzky Award for Academic Excellence, **David Lafontant**. The award honors a student (or students) who has shown excellence during their time in the MSP program exemplified by high academic achievement; notable contributions in service to the department, community, or profession; and exemplary performance in their professional pursuits. The award memorializes the contributions of alum Chris Kochtitzky to planning.

Congratulations to **Cassidy Taylor** who was nominated for APA Florida Student of the Year. This nomination is given to a student who has the potential to make a significant impact on professional planning practice.

Selected Faculty Publications

Dr. Kelly Kinahan and collaborators at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and the University of Louisville were recently awarded a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Program to conduct research and provide technical assistance and related outreach on minimizing displacement resulting from brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse. The goal is to help communities build practical knowledge, prepare for and direct the changes sparked by brownfields assessment and cleanup activities to minimize displacement, maximize benefits to existing or indigenous community members, and provide other environmental and public health benefits to the existing community.

Dr. Michael Duncan's paper "The Influence of Pedestrian Plans on Walk Commuting in US Municipalities" was recently published by the Science Direct Journal.

Dr. Will Butler was interviewed by NPR about a study done in collaboration with **Dr. Tisha Holmes** and PhD student Anthony Milordis. The study discusses the potential financial impacts of chronic flooding. The projected loss in assessed property value is \$619 billion by the century's end due to sea-level rise. Despite this, there's a lack of awareness among local government planners about the financial impact. The study advocates for diversifying revenue sources beyond property taxes, suggesting alternatives like sales/consumption taxes and resilience bonds. It underscores the importance of community involvement in addressing the challenges of sea-level rise.

Department of Urban &

Regional Planning

330 Bellamy Building

113 Collegiate Loop

P.O. Box 3062280

Tallahassee, FL 32306-2280

850-644-4510

Giving Back to DURP

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning wishes to thank the many firms, families, and individuals that gave to Florida State University last year to help support DURP's students, programs, and activities. These gifts have been put to excellent use in supporting graduate student scholarships and funding for conferences, bringing in outside speakers to classes and events, and allowing the department to host events such as the DURP Fall Social and Graduation.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors these gifts go a long way towards helping the department maintain its excellence in a trying fiscal climate. Remember that there are many ways to give and that no gift is too small.

If you are interested in giving to DURP, please contact Department Chair Chris Coutts (ccoutts@fsu.edu).

To learn more about our program:

<https://coss.fsu.edu/durp/>

durp@coss.fsu.edu

850-644-4510